

Remarks

The undersigned greatly appreciates the Examiner's taking the time to discuss the amendment to claim 6 that it fulfils the intention to limit the step of curing to a non-tacky coating to only a step of irradiating.

Amended and newly added claims

The amendment to claim 6 and the newly added claims are supported by the specification. Claim 6 is amended to recite that the curing of the hot melt to a non-tacky coating is done solely by exposing the coated substrate to electromagnetic radiation having a wavelength $\lambda \leq 500$ nm. Support for this recitation can be found on page 5, lines 22-24, for example.

New claim 11 differs from original claim 6 by reciting an application temperature in the range from "40 to 90°C." Support for this recitation can be found on page 7, lines 4-9, for example. New claims 12-15 correspond to original claims 7-10, except that they depend from claim 11.

New claim 16 differs from amended claim 6 by reciting "40 to 90 wt.% of an ultraviolet radiation curable polyester acrylate resin." New claim 17 adds a UV curable polyurethane acrylate resin and/or a UV curable epoxy acrylate resin to claim 16. Support for new claims 16 and 17 can be found on pages 7 and 8 of the specification, for example.

Rejection under 102

Claims 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Bolte. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is overcome for the reasons set forth below.

The final Office Action of May 23, 2002, points out that Bolte is "not interested in a tacky coating." Bolte, col. 21, ll. 50-68, is cited in support of this point. It is agreed that Bolte is not interested in a tacky coating. To achieve a non-tacky coating, Bolte cures (polymerizes) by (1) using a free radical method, or UV

or electron radiation and by (2) subjecting the coating to an inert atmosphere by applying an inert gas or a layer/film of water. Col. 21, ll. 16-19, 44-46, and 50 - col. 22, l. 51. Without the application of an inert gas or a layer/film of water, the surface of the coating will be soft and sticky (definitely tacky). Col. 21, ll. 55-66.

In contrast, to Bolte, the claimed process cures to a non-tacky coating solely by irradiation. See, for example, page 5, ll. 22-24. Accordingly, it is submitted that the claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from Bolte.

New claims 11-15 and 16-17 are also patentably distinguishable from Bolte. In new claims 11-15, the application temperature is very low, in the range from 40 to 90°C, while the application temperature in Bolte is +100-220°C. See, Col. 28, ll. 46-47, and col. 29-30, Table 4. In new claims 16-17, the claimed process cures to a non-tacky coating solely by irradiation, as in claims 6-10 discussed above.

Respectfully submitted,



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